

THE BLUE HOLE

The BAMSI Bulletin

January 27, 2016

LAUNCHING INTO THE DEEP

BAMSI outlines Continuing Education
platform for 2016

THE beginning of a New Year brings with it rich promise and great expectancy. With this mindset the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI) is broadening its outreach efforts and launching a host of new programmes, short courses and seminars in 2016. The focused roll out of academic, professional and personal development opportunities is expected to positively impact the North and Central Andros communities and also attract interest from residents in the nation's capital and Family of Islands.

Dr. Raveenia Roberts-Hanna, Executive Director of BAMSI, sees the Institute's role, particularly in the Andros community, as a driving force in creating tangible, substantive progress in the lives of Bahamians through education. The courses offered by BAMSI will help learners connect the new information gained with their experience in the workplace, at school and even in their homes with their families.

"The role of education is to improve lives, strengthen communities and to create a society that flourishes through the work of professionals, the respectful exchange of ideas and concepts and the peaceful coexistence of its citizenry," Dr. Roberts-Hanna said. "At BAMSI we are pushing to accomplish this aspect of our mandate...because we are here, people's lives will change for the better. And while our focus is on



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Division of Continuing Education & Professional Development Studies

The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute

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New Year's Greetings from BAMSI's Executive Director

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s we emerge from a holiday season that was filled with celebration, joy and thanksgiving, I am grateful for the accomplishments of a year past - goals that have been met, triumphs that have been attained, and the success that has been achieved. I also see how far we still have to travel as we work together to develop this Institution into one that has not only national impact, but shifts the industry forward on a regional and even global level in the areas of agricultural technologies and innovative, sustainable measures that support food security.

It is with the support of a strong, talented team of professionals that we sail into the mid-stream of our sophomore year - the 2015/2016 academic period, and I take this opportunity to say thank you to members of staff and faculty for their untiring efforts, uplifted spirits and commitment to the vision that is BAMSI.

I take this opportunity also, to throw out a challenge to all who join hands with me to move BAMSI forward, onward and upward, that as we usher in a New Year we will return invigorated and even more committed to establishing the Institute as a centre of learning unsurpassed in the region. Our goal is to attract brilliant young minds who are persistent in the pursuit of their dreams, ready to be an instrument of radical change, and intelligent and disciplined enough to see their goals through to a fruitful end.

To date we have been fortunate to have an array of capable, spirited, curious and determined young Bahamians who have taken advantage of this incredible opportunity to access a tertiary level education right here in our Bahamaland. My desire as we head into 2016 and beyond is that BAMSI will be a beacon of light settled in the pine forests of Andros calling out to our most accomplished high school graduates - challenging them to improve the way we eat, the way we grow, the way we harvest and conserve – together building a better Bahamas, a better community, a better place in the sunshine.

As the year draws to a close I am thankful for our accomplishments and I extend warm wishes of the season to all including a North Andros community that has been incredibly supportive, always at the ready to assist and willing us to succeed.

To friends, family, colleagues and students, may the blessing of this great season be yours now and forever! Wishing you a Happy and Prosperous 2016.



Dr. Raveenia Roberts-Hanna
Executive Director

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BAMSI Launches New Courses cont'd from pg. 1.

the development of agriculturalists and marine scientists and seeing these associated industries address the country's food security and sustainability needs, we want to support lifelong learning through our short courses, programmes and seminars that can be practically applied in a student's everyday life."

One of the more exciting opportunities to arise is BAMSI's four-week cultural immersion programme. The course is a natural output following the signing of a memorandum of understanding with China's Ocean University. The 4-week course will focus on teaching Mandarin, and also introducing Bahamians to Chinese culture, food and its business/trade environment. Visiting Professor William Zou, from Ocean University, will be leading the course.



Core among the new offerings is an upgraded college preparatory series that will focus on helping recent graduates meet the requirements for entry into BAMSI. The summer session, which includes mathematics, English and biology, is also open to adults who would like to upgrade their academic standing to gain advancement on the job, improve their position in a job search or even for personal satisfaction.

BAMSI's Summer Education Enrichment Development Programme (SEEDs) enters its second year after a successful launch that saw a contingent from the Berry Islands get an up close and personal view of Andros' agriculture and marine science industries. SEEDs has a dual purpose, to introduce junior and senior high



school students to the agriculture industry, and for those students who may already be involved in a school programme, it encourages continued interest and opens the door for them to consider a career in the field of agriculture and to consider BAMSI as an important option in their future academic journey.

One of BAMSI's more sought after programmes, 'Invest in Yourself: Entrepreneurship 101' supports individuals who want to start their own business. The eight-week course will be held in Staniard Creek in Central Andros. This series teaches participants how to take their dream from an idea to fruition by giving them the tools to be successful, including develop a budget, marketing their products and services, networking and creating a business plan.

While the Institute's academic objective remains the same – leading people through a course of study that will culminate in an Associate degree, certificate or diploma in Agriculture, Aquaponics or Marine Science – these supplemental courses play a critical role in educating the populace. They open the door for non-traditional learners to continue their academic pursuits, and help bolster the strengths of recent high school graduates, preparing them to continue their education with BAMSI and beyond.

** For more information on any of these course or BAMSI's degree programmes, call 242.329.1700/3 or 242.397.6580 or email: bamsiadmissions@gmail.com or bamsibahamas@gmail.com

BAMSI VISITS COLLEGE FAIRS

By Cascharel Taylor, BAMSI's Senior Admissions Officer

SOUTH ANDROS HIGH SCHOOL



Cascharel Taylor addresses students at the South Andros Senior High College Fair

My visit to South Andros High School in Kemp's Bay, South Andros was very exciting; it was also my first time visiting the island. I received a warm welcome from both staff and students present. I shared platform with a small group from Bahamas Agriculture Industrial Corporation (BAIC) during the event. The students were eager and receptive during and after the informative presentations about BAMSI. Sadly, most of the students knew little to nothing about the Institute, but by the end of the day South Andros High School students became fully aware of the "BUZZ" going down in North Andros.

After discussions with both Dr. Raveenia Roberts-Hanna, BAMSI's Executive Director and Miss Jermia Taylor, the school's guidance counselor, students in grade twelve will be visit-



South Andros High School Students

ing the Institute in the upcoming year for an official tour; plans are being discussed and finalized. This news was heart wrenching for both tenth and eleventh graders to accept as they too would love to be a part of the trip as well - hopefully an arrangement can be made for them to join. I must reiterate, the South Andros High School family was truly thankful for BAMSI's presence; and they are already anticipating our next visit.

We can expect a good number of students from South Andros High to be in attendance at the Institute in the upcoming Fall semester (I will be on them); applications were received and an extra package of enrollment documents was left with the Guidance Counselor's Department. From the bottom of my heart I say "thank you" and I truly appreciate the opportunity given to represent the Institute.

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CC Sweeting High School

DESPITE having the Agriculture Programme removed from their curriculum C. C. Sweeting Senior High School was an excited bunch who wanted to know more about “BAMSI”. I was able to gather up a total five definite students who plan to attend the Institute in Fall 2016; these students were also a part of the agriculture programme that has been discontinued. I was able to persuade a few students from their original career goals as well after clarifying the role of BAMSI in the Bahamas. Most of them became very enthused and are now contemplating whether or not they should attend.

During my time at the fair I took some time out to connect with some of the other institutes that took part such as: The Bahamas Baptist College, Bahamas Technical Vocational Institute (BTVI) and Lyford Cay Foundation Inc. I handed them the Institute’s information and surprisingly they have had persons come in who were interested in pursuing agriculture degree programmes. They were glad to receive the information and promised to hand out the Institute’s enrollment information to any future persons inquiring and direct them to our office. Mrs. Philippa Shaw, guidance counselor expressed an interest in arranging a one-day trip for the agricultural students to the Institute, like South Andros; those plans are being arranged and finalized. Overall the fair was a success; once again I would like to thank the Institute for the experience and opportunity to represent “BAMSI”.

** To contact Ms. Taylor for information on admission to any of BAMSI’s programmes, including the Institute’s Associate Degree programmes in Agriculture, Marine Science and Aquaponics email: bamsiadmissions@gmail.com or call 242.397.6580



Ms. Taylor with two prospective BAMSI students



C.C. Sweeting students attend College Fair

The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute
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SEEDS: Summer Education Enrichment Discovery Programme

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Bloom

Where you are *PLANTED*

WHEN it comes to choosing a career, children often follow their parents into the world of employment. Whether it is the lucrative nature of the craft or the passion displayed by mom and dad, the little ones see what drives their parents and yearn to experience the same. Such was the case for Marina Newton...eventually.

A second-year agriculture student at The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI), Mrs. Newton is also a full time

'Her Say'

BAMSI's Student Perspective

commercial farmer. Her connection to the land began when she was a child and her father, a citrus farmer in Andros. She grew up understanding the nature of the work and was long comfortable negotiating the land to produce a rich harvest. As a child, her mother also engaged in farming on a small scale. "My mum did a lot of subsistence farming, basic field crops like peas, potatoes and cassava. She grew vegetables on a small scale, just enough for the



Marina Newton

family. In those days we had limited access to traditional food stores."

Her foray into agriculture on the large scale would not begin until many years later however. "I grew up having my own garden - now being an adult I could transfer it over to bring in an income for me. My first crop (commercial enterprise) was goat pepper." According to Ms. Newton, she never actually wanted to be a farmer. In school she wanted to be a teacher or a nurse, especially since her mother would often tell her that she named her after a nurse. "I really wanted to be a teacher growing up and

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when I got to high school I wanted to be a secretary, so I



Mrs. Newton at BAMSI

took up studies in office clerical work, but I always had a farm going on. My weekends were devoted to being on the farm and growing food” that would both feed and sustain the family.

Her situation, one that found her attached to the land yet looking for economic support in other sectors, was not uncommon in Andros or the nation’s Family of Islands. Many women throughout the archipelago grew up farming and even as they entered adult life remained linked to the land in some capacity, but they also turned to other means, seemingly more stable, reliable and further away from manual labour, to support themselves

and their families.

So into the corporate world Mrs. Newton marched, eager to gain an experience beyond the farm and to put her training to use, but it proved to be a mismatch. She quickly found that the money she could make and her ability to manage her own time was unmatched in the agriculture sector – so she would turn to what she knew well and begin a career that would see her spend some 20 plus years in the field.

“Farming has been really good to me. I’ve been able to purchase the blocks from the farming money for my three bedroom, two bathroom home; purchased vehicles off farming, able to take my kids to Disney World off farming, and take my break over the summer and go fishing.”

From the corporate world to the farm and now back to the classroom, Mrs. Newton prepares to turn another page in her story as

she looks to graduate from BAM SI this summer after successfully completing an Associate Degree in Agriculture.

And what of her time at BAMSI? Like many of the mature students who already have practical experience, some working their own farms, Mrs. Newton came to BAMSI to enhance her agriculture skills and to understand the science behind some of the techniques and traditions that she was using. BAMSI has also introduced her to techniques that she has never been exposed to. “Coming here has broadened my horizons on how many other aspects of farming I can incorporate on my farm such as livestock. I now see the importance of combining both livestock and crops – the



Mrs. Newton (far right) is pictured with Ms. Constantina Hamilton, Assistant Farm Manager, BAMSI and Dr. Joseph Lindsay (centre) during his Crop Production class at BAMSI.

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BAHAMAS COMMITTEE TO THE FAO TOURS BAMSI



Pictured at left are members of the Bahamas Committee on FAO Matters along with faculty and staff of BAMSI. Standing front row, centre is Ambassador Eneas, Committee chairman and BAMSI's Executive Director Dr. Raveenia Roberts Hanna (front row, third from right).



Charged with providing recommendations on the nation's position in agriculture, the Bahamas Committee on FAO is made up of a wide cross sections of professionals in adjunct fields and industries who are able to provide perspective, support, recommendations based on insight from their various sectors.

GODFREY Eneas, chairman of the Bahamas Committee on the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) matters and also Bahamas Ambassador to the FAO, was joined in North Andros by committee members for their final meeting of 2015. Ambassador Eneas, who also serves as President of the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute, led the group on a tour of local communities, BAMSI's commercial farm, and its administrative and academic facilities.

In December, the Bahamas Government and the FAO signed onto the Bahamas' Country Programming Framework (CFP). According to media analysis, the three-year agreement supports the country's efforts in achieving its national development objectives and priorities, which include food security commitments, that align with UN sustainable development goals. During the signing, Minister of Agriculture Alfred Gray said the CFP identifies areas of priority and will guide the partnership between the Government and the FAO. Ambassador Eneas and his committee have been charged with oversight of the process and are expected to monitor the implementation process of the framework.

PERSONAL SUCCESS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES



Members of the Central Andros community came out to hear BASMI facilitators discuss the initial steps needed to launch a successful business.

THE Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI) recently hosted the 'Invest in Yourself: Entrepreneurship 101' seminar held at the Central Andros High School in Love Hill, Central Andros. The forum, the first of its kind for the community, was deemed a success as almost two dozen persons attended the event and participants were eager to gain a better understanding of the steps needed to develop their idea and bring it to the marketplace successfully.

The seminar, which is part of a larger series of engagement opportunities with Central Andros, falls in line with BAMSI's mandate of meeting the needs of surrounding communities, and in particular advancing a dialogue for financial development within the sectors of Agriculture and Marine sciences. The Institute has developed a number of professional and personal development courses aimed at supporting individuals who are working to improve themselves, develop new competencies, embark upon

entrepreneurial ventures and improve their academic proficiency.

Facilitator Alaasis Braynen, business lecturer and financial

and BAMSI Marketing Officer Ms. Jeri Kelly. Central Andros Administrator Ms. Cleola Pinder was also instrumental in arranging the event.

INVEST IN YOURSELF: ENTREPRENEURSHIP 101

services expert, said beyond the development of sound business practices in support of the launch of their entrepreneurial undertaking, one of the objectives of the seminar was to heighten awareness of BAMSI's role in the socio-economic development of Andros. Organizers also hoped to canvas the community to determine what some of the larger interests were for future learning with regard to their personal wealth and community development.

Mr. Braynen was joined by Senior Administrator and Soil Scientist Dr. Joseph Lindsay

Participants were exposed to a number of important concepts including business planning, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)



Marketing Officer Jeri Kelly during her presentation.

analysis, land acquisition, value added, finance and credit, marketing analysis and target marketing. According to the Mr. Braynen, there was spirited discussion at the end of the session and participants appeared to be eagerly engaged.

BAMSI Students Get Involved

From meeting the Island Administrator to hosting a clean-up campaign

North Andros Island Administrator Mr. Ivan Ferguson urged BAMSI students to remain focused on their goals – gaining important skills and building a knowledge base that will allow them to successfully enter the agriculture and marine science fields as entrepreneurs or skilled employees who bring valuable assets to the workplace.

He encouraged them to resist the temptation to become bored with or distracted from the task at hand, telling them that the effort that they apply today

FOCUS FORWARD TOWARD YOUR GOALS

in their studies at BAMSI would be worth the sacrifice in the long run and bring with it much reward.

Mr. Ferguson also discussed the importance of being a great leader instead of following the crowd – a move that often gets individuals in trouble. He tied this in with his role as Island Administrator,

helping the students to understand how that role functions and what his responsibilities are.

No stranger to the BAMSI family, Mr. Ferguson has been a source of support and a frequent guest of the Institute.



Mr. Ivan Ferguson



Chief Nursing Officer Bridgette Evans

WHILE the primary focus of The Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute is preparing a cadre of educated professionals in the agriculture and marine science fields, the Institute is

LET'S TALK SEX

also concerned with the holistic development of its student body. The Student Enrichment Series, which consists of seminars, volunteer opportunities, special events and

programmes, was started by the Student Affairs Department to support the overall development of the Institute's young men and women.

Addressing the topic 'Let's Talk Sex', Chief

Nursing Officer Bridgette Evans, from the North Andros Community Clinic, visited the campus to speak to students about their sexual health.

Pointing out that education is the key to living a healthy lifestyle, she described the terrible impact sexually transmitted infections could have on their bodies if they failed to protect themselves. She encouraged responsible sexual behavior and also empowered them to

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**THE BAHAMAS AGRICULTURE AND MARINE SCIENCE INSTITUTE'S
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Clean-up Campaign Gets Underway at South Mastic Point Beach



RALLYING the troops to show their community spirit, BAMSI's Student Affairs Department led the charge for a clean-up campaign of South Mastic Point Beach. The campaign also tackled a nearby creek, pond and the surrounding area. With a team of some 17 students to assist with the clean-up, the group collected 33 bags of garbage, bottles and debris, and three tires. The event demonstrated for students that giving back to the community and keeping one's environment clean is everyone's responsibility. Student Affairs Officer Jarenda Rahming (pictured above in white cap) said her office hopes to make the clean-up effort a regular event on the BAMSI calendar.

Let's Talk Sex cont'd from pg. 12

say no to sexual activity if they feel they are not ready.

Nurse Evans also urged the students to be aware of changes in their bodies and to quickly seek appropriate medical care when they have a concern. She added that the North Andros Community Clinic offers many services and available to assist them when necessary.

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Students pay close attention to Nurse Evans' presentation.

Pointing the way for Future Generations



Pictured above: 1. Students get a close look as a BAMSI employee works on a banana tree. 2. Mr. Ayrett Lightbourne, a senior member of the Commercial farm team, leads the students on a tour. 3. Students receive an overview of the application process and what BAMSI has to offer them. 4. Dr. Vallierre Deleveaux, BAMSI's Deputy Executive Director, explains how the demonstration aquaponics tank works. 5. Central Andros High School students visit BAMSI

BAMSI hosts students from Central Andros High

In spite of overcast skies and scattered showers nearly 50 students from Central Andros High School were excited to visit BAMSI where they learned more about the agricultural institute and what it can offer them once they graduate.

Dr. Vallierre Deleveaux, BAMSI's Deputy Executive Director, and member of faculty and Soil Scientist Dr. Joseph Lindsay hosted the group. He gave the students a tour of the administrative offices and classrooms, as well as the demonstration aquaponics system that BAMSI's marine science and aquaponics students use to better understand the unique farming method which does not require soil to grow produce.

During their initial briefing, Dr. Deleveaux explained BAMSI's application process to students, pointing out key areas that they should be aware of, such as the requirement for five BGCSEs (Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations at 'C' or above, and how important it is to do well in subjects such as math, English and biology. He also explained that BAMSI offers associate degrees in Agriculture, Marine Science and Aquaponics.

The students were also given a tour of BAMSI's commercial farm.



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Facilitators: Alaasis Braynen, Financial Services Professional

Jeri Kelly, Marketing Coordinator, BAMSI

Dr. Joseph Lindsay, Business Specialist

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- In New Providence: Visit BAMSI's offices in the Island Trader's Building on East Bay Street. Call 397.7400 or 397.6580 for more information.
- In Andros: Visit the campus in the BARTAD Building, Queen's Highway. Call 329.1700-3 or 376.6905 for more information.
- Family Island residents contact your Island Administrators office.

For more information, email bamsiadmissions@gmail.com

****The deadline to apply is March 28, 2016**

Marina Newton cont'd from pg. 9

crops can feed the animals and the animal manure or fertilizer can be used on the crops – that's one of the things I want to do after I leave BAMSI."

Her studies in soil science have also proven to be beneficial. "[Soil science] is the foundation for everything that I'm doing. If the soil is in the right condition everything else falls into place. This was something new for me, I came here with little knowledge of science and it's really been an eye opener. Something else that I learned was crop rotation or the science behind it. This was a technique that I had already implemented on the farm, but I never knew the scientific reason behind it or the terminology behind it. Now I can speak to what I am doing and also communi-

cate clearly what is happening on the farm.

"Another example is with the legumes, the old people would say '[legumes] build up the ground – and now I've learned the science behind it. Legumes resist bacteria and attract nitrates from the air which turn into usable nitrogen which enriches the soil. So if you're working with a new plot but the soil is not as rich as you would like it to be, you can plant legumes as cover crops for two or three years while also planting vegetables like tomatoes, and get better results".

For Bahamian women considering the agriculture industry, Mrs. Newton urged them to 'take it in stride'. "Don't start today and expect to have

a mega impact on the industry overnight. There are a lot of pitfalls and a lot of lessons to learn. It's best to take it in small intervals, don't think you can start a tomato farm today and tomorrow go international. It's best to start a half acre crop, something that is easily grown, economically feasible, one that does not call for too much attention – cucumbers are a six-week crop, peppers also, so provided you don't get your expected forecast your loss won't be so big."

Despite the potential for significant loss, Mrs Newton continues to champion an industry that has supported her and her family for many years.

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